

CORONER EXAMINES EVIDENCE IN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Wecht Sees More Than One Gunman in JFK Slaying

By ROBERT VOELKER

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

More than one gunman fired at the slain President John F. Kennedy, asserts Dr. Cyril H. Wecht who last week became the first critic of the Warren Commission report to examine items from Kennedy's autopsy.

Dr. Wecht, Allegheny County coroner and a medical expert long interested in the assassination, spent last Wednesday and Thursday in the National Archives in Washington examining evidence.

"WE KNOW that two people had to be firing," said Wecht, disagreeing with the Warren Commission which said Lee Harvey Oswald alone did the shooting and that one bullet hit Kennedy and also passed through the body of former Gov. John Connally of Texas.

"The single-shot theory is absolutely untenable from a scientific standpoint," he added yesterday.

Significantly, Dr. Wecht said, the preserved brain of Kennedy and key microscopic slides of tissue removed from his bullet wounds have been withheld from the archives.

Also missing from the archives, he said, are photos showing the interior of Kennedy's chest and the interior of the brain.

Also, he said, brain X-rays in the archives reveal a foreign object that could have been a flattened bullet fragment. "No one knows what it is," he said. "The pathologist



DR. CYRIL WECHT
Says evidence missing.

who did the autopsy never even mentioned it."

In a telephone conversation from Connecticut where he spent the weekend, Wecht told the Post-Gazette:

"Very important pieces of evidence are simply absent with no comment on their whereabouts. We've got an incomplete case. If Oswald went on trial today, the case would be thrown out of court."

Wecht said he planned to go to Yale University today to make a formal request to Burke Marshall, former Kennedy family representative who is now a Yale professor,

for a complete examination of the evidence by a team of experts in pathology, radiology, criminology and firearms.

"Let's have an honest and full review," he said. "Let's cut out the games."

AN EXAMINATION of the brain, said Wecht, is necessary to unravel the mystery of the foreign object which appeared in X-rays. He said the object could be a brain tumor, but added it is "unacceptable that the public has never been told what it was."

In regard to the microscopic slides, Wecht pointed out that bullets burn and soil tissue around the wound of entry but not at the exit point. Therefore, he explained, the slides could settle the question whether the bullets which hit Kennedy had been fired from the rear.

Wecht said the evidence he examined strongly supports the Warren Commission's report that Kennedy was struck in the head and body by bullets fired from the rear.

However, he said, his examination of the bullet that is purported to have passed through Kennedy's body destroys the Warren Commission's theory that the same bullet caused severe wounds to Connally. The bullet, he said, is in almost perfect condition.

His study of the relative positions of Kennedy and Connally in the car also totally rules out the "single-shoot" theory, he said.

IN ADDITION, studies of motion pictures taken at the assassination scene in Dallas, together with testimony from firearms experts, prove it was totally impossible for one gunman to have fired the bullets so quickly from a bolt-action rifle, he added.

In response to Wecht's statements, a spokesman for the Kennedy family told the New York Times that all evidence requested by the Justice Department had been placed in the archives, and that Wecht had turned to "offensive" probing because the evidence in the archives did not support his doubts about Oswald being the sole gunman.

The Times quoted Marshall as saying that other items of evidence apparently had not been requested by the Justice Department because "they have no bearing on who killed the President." Marshall said he deplored Wecht's "chasing

after parts of the President's body because he hasn't found any evidence that anything else was wrong."

In response, Wecht told the Post-Gazette:

"I am not trying to be offensive and I deeply resent his arrogant remarks. I've got to say the things that are important. I am only interested in the very hard physical evidence that would get to the essence of this case."

WECHT ALSO criticized what he called "the breakdown of the chain of custody" of evidence. As a medical doctor and a lawyer, Wecht said there are so many gaps in the evidence that if the government tried to present a case against Oswald in court "their testimony would be totally comprised or barred completely."

The Times said interviews with government officials and President Kennedy's former

personal secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, disclosed that the microscopic slides and probably the brain, which was removed from the body in the 1963 autopsy and preserved in a container of formalin, were delivered in a locked chest to a representative of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy in 1965.

When the autopsy materials were placed in the archives in 1966, Marshall told the Times, the brain and possibly other items were not included.

Wecht said he feels certain the brain is still "around somewhere," and said he intends to ask Marshall to permit a team of experts to examine it. "Who would have taken the responsibility to destroy the brain?" Wecht asked.

Wecht said his examination of autopsy pictures and X-rays raised these additional questions:

► Why was the wound in the back of Kennedy's head described in the Warren report as four inches lower than the pictures show, and why does the report's drawing show the wound in the back to be several inches lower than in the photographs?

► Why was there nothing reported about a "little flap" of what could be loose scalp visible just above the hairline on the back left side of Kennedy's head? Wecht said this might have been an entrance or exit wound.

WECHT IS a past president of the American Academy of

Forensic Sciences (AAFS) and a director of the Pittsburgh Institute of Legal Medicine and the Institute of Forensic Sciences at Duquesne University. He also is a research professor of law at Duquesne and an instructor of pathology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

He said he started taking special interest in the Kennedy assassination in 1965 when he was asked to submit a paper on the subject at a meeting of the AAFS.

The Times suggested a connection between Wecht and the Committee to Investigate Assassinations which includes Jim Garrison, former district attorney of New Orleans.

However, Wecht told the Post-Gazette he has no connection with the group, said that he is carrying out his work "totally on my own" and with his own money.

Wilbur Cohen
Aids McGovern

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wilbur J. Cohen, a former Health and Welfare Secretary, will head a campaign for George McGovern among social workers, McGovern's presidential campaign office said yesterday.

Mrs. Sargent Shriver, who has done social work and is the wife of the Democratic vice presidential nominee, will be honorary chairman.

Eye Hospital
Given \$15,000

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. has presented a \$15,000 grant to Eye and Ear Hospital for the development of surgical techniques in treating retinal diseases.

Some 450 patients are admitted each year to Eye and Ear with retinal diseases, the second most frequent cause of blindness in the country.

It's a Bargain Hunter's Paradise in today's Post-Gazette Classified Section.

Handwritten initials: JFB

Handwritten note: Am paper